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New York Stall Discovers China's Lost Sword, Experts Raise 1.8 Million to Buy, Now Value 2 Billion

by qiqinews January 22, 2020

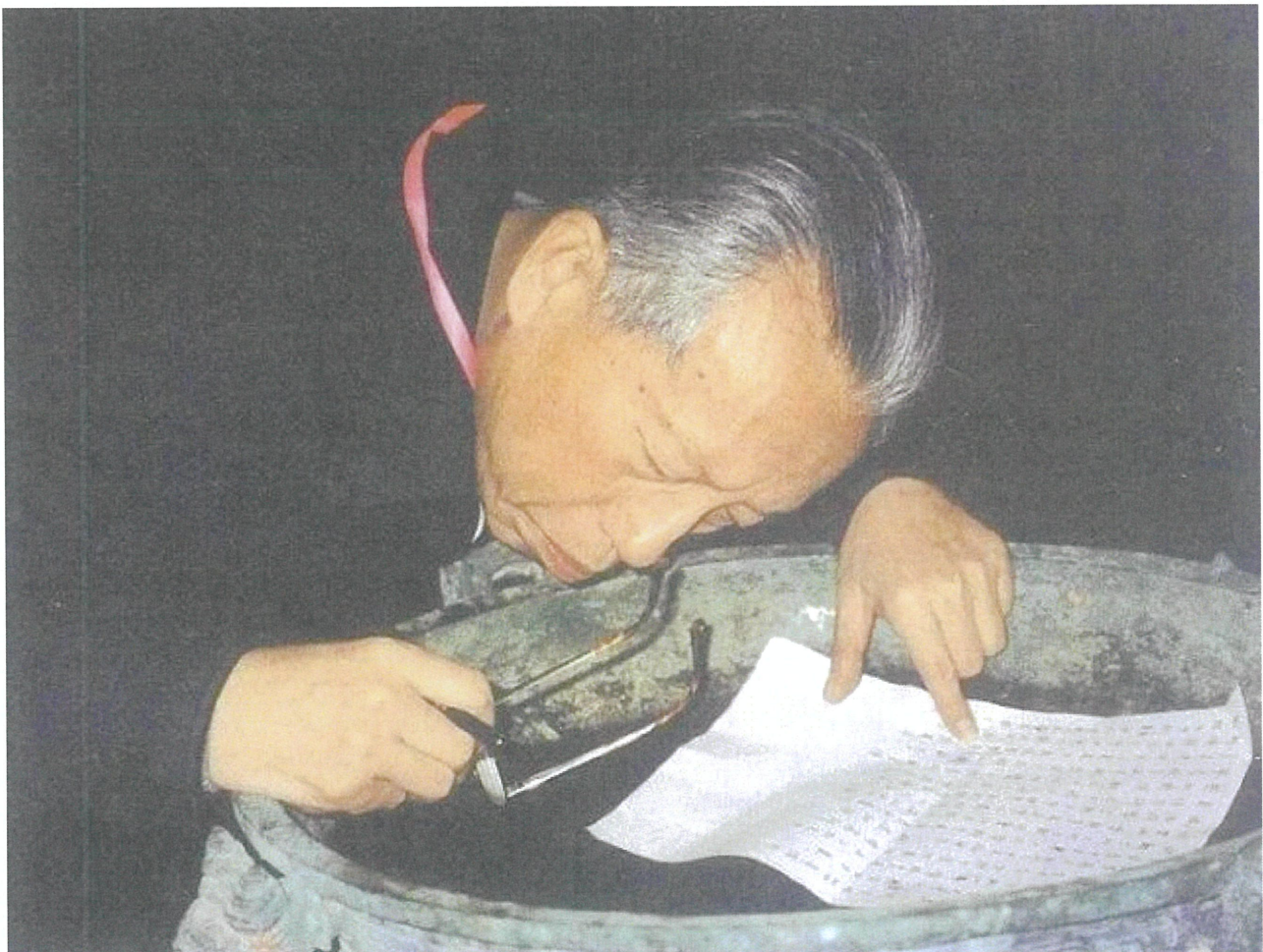
Some cultural relics in modern China were lost during the war. After the founding of the People's Republic of China, many cultural relic protection experts often visited the world in order to recover the cultural relics of that year. The famous bronze expert Mr. Ma Chengyuan was one of them. He once bought a magnificent sword on a foreign stand for 1.8 million yuan, and now the sword is worth 2 billion.



In the 1990s, Mr. Ma Chengyuan often traveled overseas and in Hong Kong and other places. His apparent identity was a tourist. In fact, his main purpose was to find cultural relics lost during the war in China.



He once wandered in an antique trading street in New York, USA, and a bronze piece on a stall caught his attention. This bronze piece was an ancient sword. After careful observation, he studied the bronze pieces quite well. Mr. Ma can conclude that this sword is a timeless treasure, and its value is definitely no less than that of the domestic gossip sword. But when he was going to buy it, he encountered difficulties, because the other party asked for three million, which was an astronomical figure for Mr. Ma at the time, but he couldn't see the Chinese cultural relics living overseas.



So Ma Chengyuan sought help from Chinese groups in the United States, and finally bought it for 1.8 million at a bargain. After being brought back to China, the sword was identified by other experts and it was unanimously confirmed that the sword was the saber of the son of Yue Gou Jian. Its value is equivalent to the sword of Yue Wang Gou Jian. Today, some experts value it at 2 billion, which shows that Ma Lao paid a high price to buy it back in the past. It was an extremely correct decision.

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PREV

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NEXTTAKE

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Sword of Goujian

The **Sword of Goujian** (simplified Chinese: 越王勾践剑; traditional Chinese: 越王勾踐劍) is an archaeological artifact of the Spring and Autumn period (771–403 BC) found in 1965 in Hubei, China. Cast in tin bronze, it is renowned for its unusual sharpness and resistance to tarnish rarely seen in artifacts so old. This historical artifact of ancient China is currently in the possession of the Hubei Provincial Museum.

Sword of Goujian	
	
Goujian sword, Hubei Provincial Museum	
Material	Bronze
Created	Spring and Autumn period (771 to 403 BC)
Discovered	1965 in Jiangling County
Present location	Hubei Provincial Museum, Hubei Province, China

Contents

Discovery

Identification

Construction

Chemical composition

Amount of elements by percentage

Damage

See also

References

External links

Discovery

In 1965, while an archaeological survey was being performed along the second main aqueduct of the Zhang River Reservoir in Jingzhou, Hubei, a series of ancient tombs were discovered in Jiangling County. A dig started in the middle of October 1965, ending in January 1966, eventually revealing more than fifty ancient tombs of the Chu State.

More than 2,000 artifacts were recovered from the sites, including an ornate bronze sword, found inside a casket together with a human skeleton. The casket was discovered in December 1965, at Wangshan site #1, 7 kilometres (4.3 mi) from the ruins of Ying, currently called Jinancheng (纪南), an ancient capital of Chu.

The sword was found sheathed in a wooden scabbard finished in black lacquer. The scabbard had an almost air-tight fit with the sword body. Unsheathing the sword revealed an untarnished blade, despite the tomb being soaked in underground water for over 2,000 years.

Identification

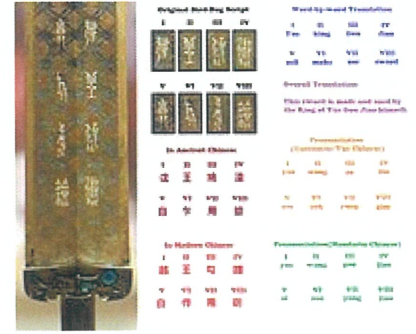
On one side of the blade, two columns of text are visible. Eight characters are written in an ancient script, now known as Bird-worm seal script (literally "birds and worms characters", owing to the intricate decorations of the defining strokes), a variant of seal script. Initial analysis of the text deciphered six of the characters, "King of Yue" (越王) and "made this sword for [his] personal use"



Part of the ancient text, lit. 'The King of Yue personally made' (越王自作)

(自作用劍). The remaining two characters were assumed to be the name of the particular King of Yue.

From the sword's origin in 510 BC to its demise at the hands of the Chu in 334 BC, nine kings ruled Yue, including Goujian, Lu Cheng, Bu Shou, and Zhu Gou. The identity of the king in the sword inscription sparked debate among archeologists and Chinese language scholars. The discussion was carried out mostly via letter, and involved famous scholars such as Guo Moruo. After more than two months, the experts started to form a consensus that the original owner of the sword was Goujian (勾踐), the King of Yue made famous by his perseverance in time of hardship.



Deciphering the scripts on the Sword of Goujian

Construction

The sword of Goujian is 55.6 centimetres (21.9 in) in length, including an 8.4 centimetres (3.3 in) hilt; the blade is 4.6 centimetres (1.8 in) wide at its base. The sword weighs 875 grams (30.9 oz). In addition to the repeating dark rhombi pattern on both sides of the blade, there are decorations of blue crystals and turquoise. The grip of the sword is bound by silk, while the pommel is composed of eleven concentric circles.

Chemical composition

The Sword of Goujian still has a sharp blade and shows no signs of tarnish. To understand why, scientists at Fudan University and CAS used modern equipment to determine the chemical composition of the sword, as shown in the table below.

Amount of elements by percentage

Part examined	Copper	Tin	Lead	Iron	Sulfur	Arsenic
Blade	80.3	18.8	0.4	0.4	–	trace
Yellow pattern	83.1	15.2	0.8	0.8	–	trace
Dark pattern	73.9	22.8	1.4	1.8	trace	trace
Darkest regions	68.2	29.1	0.9	1.2	0.5	trace
Edge	57.3	29.6	8.7	3.4	0.9	trace
Central ridge	41.5	42.6	6.1	3.7	5.9	trace

The body of the blade is mainly made of copper, making it more pliant and less likely to shatter; the edges have more tin content, making them harder and capable of retaining a sharper edge; the sulfur decreases the chance of tarnish in the patterns.

It is likely that the chemical composition, along with the almost air-tight scabbard, led to the exceptional state of preservation.

Damage

While on loan to Singapore for display as part of a cultural exchange exhibition in 1994, a worker accidentally bumped the sword against the case, resulting in a 7-millimetre (0.28 in) crack on the sword. Since then, China does not allow the sword to be taken out of the country, and in 2013 officially placed the sword onto the list of Chinese cultural relics forbidden to be exhibited abroad.^[1]

See also

- Bell metal
- Spear of Fuchai, the spear used by Goujian's arch-rival, King Fuchai of Wu
- Weapons and armor in Chinese mythology

References

1. "Not just in US ... Chinese relics damaged in Japan, Singapore, Taiwan" (<http://www.scmp.com/news/china/society/article/2134714/five-more-chinese-relics-came-cropper-display-abroad>). *South China Morning Post*. Retrieved 2018-03-29.

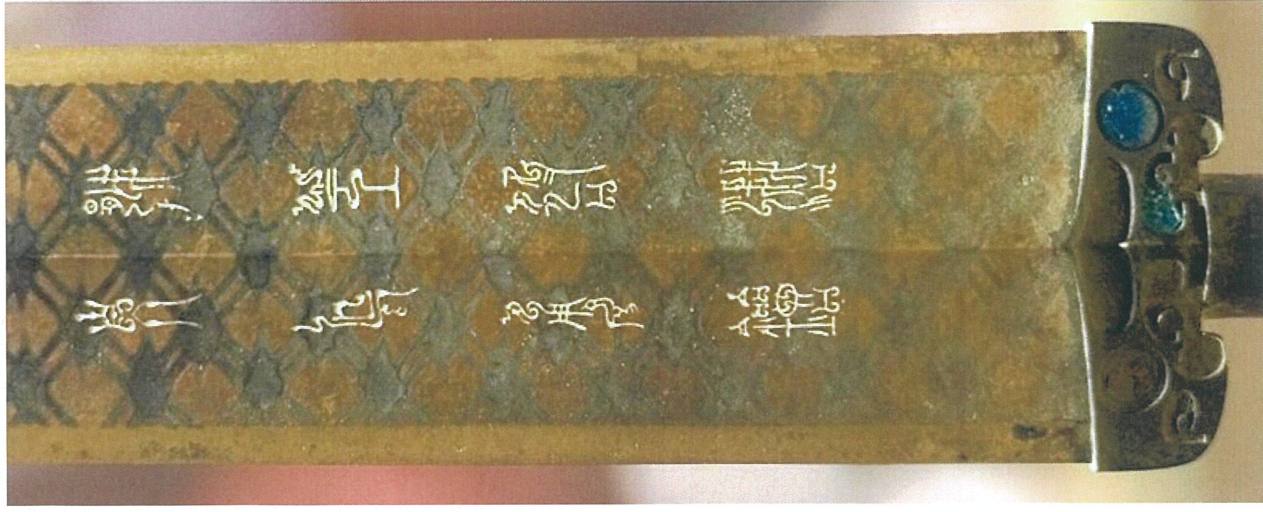
External links

- (in Chinese) Sina.com's collection of stories (<http://tech.sina.com.cn/d/focus/sword/index.shtml>)
 - (in Chinese) Sword of Goujian (<http://baike.baidu.com/view/142504.htm>)
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Original Bird-Bug Script

I	II	III	IV
V	VI	VII	VIII

Word-by-word Translation

I	II	III	IV
Yue	king	Gou	Jian
V	VI	VII	VIII
self	make	use	sword

Overall Translation:

This sword is made and used by the King of Yue Gou Jian himself.

Pronunciation (Cantonese/Yue Chinese)

I	II	III	IV
yut	wong	au	zin
V	VI	VII	VIII
zee	zok	yung	gim

In Ancient Chinese

I	II	III	IV
戊	王	鳩	淺
V	VI	VII	VIII
自	作	用	劍

In Modern Chinese

I	II	III	IV
越	王	勾	踐
V	VI	VII	VIII
自	作	用	劍

Pronunciation(Mandarin Chinese)

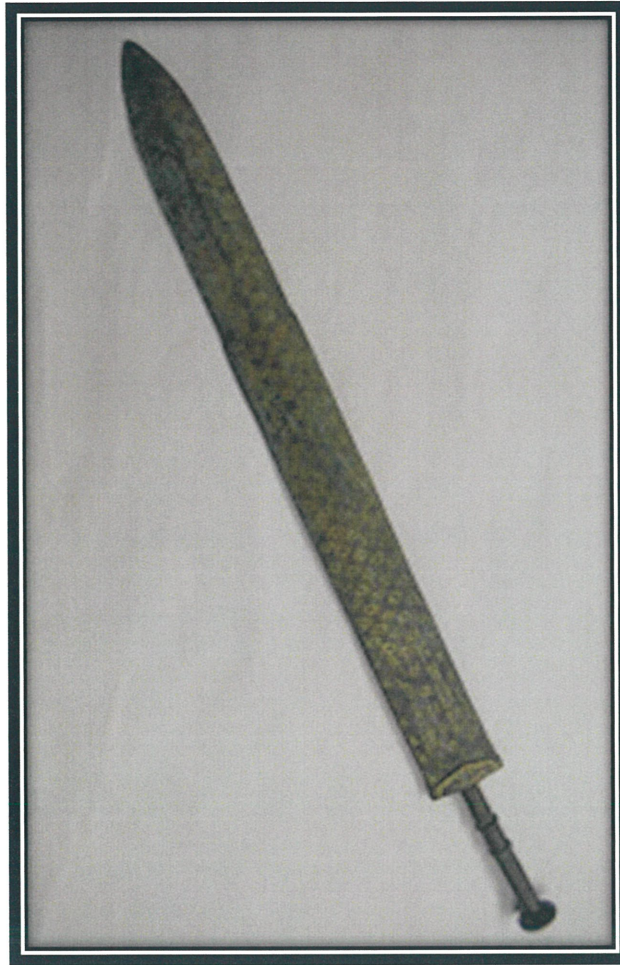
I	II	III	IV
yue	wang	gou	jian
V	VI	VII	VIII
zi	zuo	yong	jian

[More details](#)

COMMENTARY (ENGLISH TRANSLATION)

By Master Wang ZhongXin & Certified By Juyi Action House)

AHM^tS

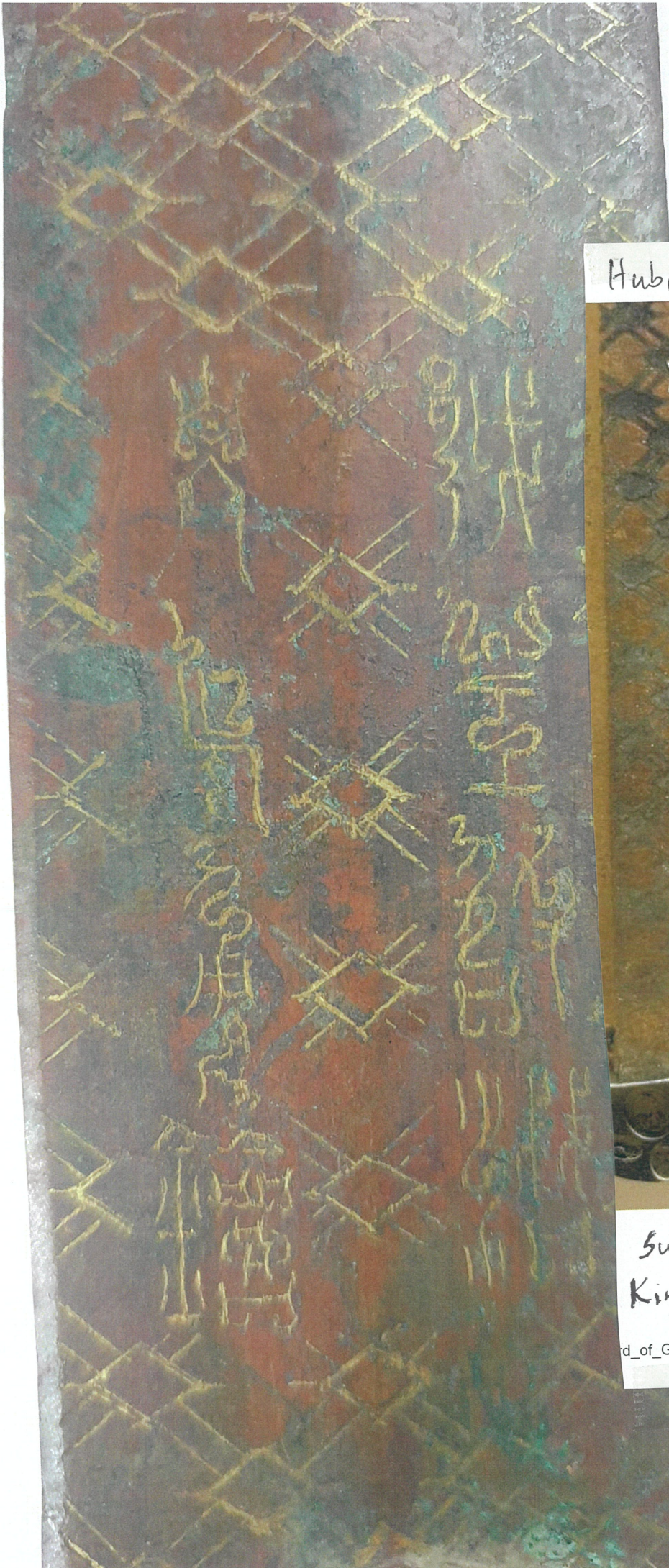


Authenticity Certificate No.	:	861217
Description	:	Bronze Sword with Gold Inlaid
Time Period	:	Warring States
Dimensions	:	Weight 736gm, Length 49cm

COMMENTARY

Ceremonial gold inlaid sword from Warring States. Handle has some natural rusting. Body of sword has very ancient characters which require further research of their meaning and significance. Well preserved with great research and collection value.

AHM's
sword



Hubei Museum



Sword of
King of Yue Goujian

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